

WALKING HUMBLY WITH GOD

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A SERMON
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*“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord
require of you, but to do justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God?”
Micah 6:8.*

WE shall chiefly dwell upon the last line, “To walk humbly with your God.” Man asks, “Why should I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God?” and as if he must set himself to answer his own question, he further inquires, “Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?” Sacrifice of some sort is his idea, but he supposes that he must supply the sacrifice himself and would gladly know what it shall be. The answer which is given him chides him for the supposition that he is to answer his own question, for it begins thus, “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you.”

If we had been attentive to God's voice we should not now be asking, “Wherewith shall I come?” for He has already shown us the way. The worship of God is the subject of revelation, not of invention. True religion is not a new design displaying each man's taste, but a copy from a plan, framed and fixed by the Lord Himself. We are to follow a path well-defined and not to map out a course for ourselves. We are not like children crying in the dark after an unknown Father, whom we seek by ways of our own, but we are as babes who follow where the warm hand of love gently draws them. To us it is not night, for the true light has risen and is shining round about us. The Father has revealed Himself and we have an unction from the Holy One so that all things necessary for this life and godliness are lifted out of the region of the unknown and placed among the matters concerning which the prophet says, “He has shown you, O man.”

The true worship of God is not left to be a matter of conjecture, to be worked out by a man's thoughts from within, but it is a matter of distinct revelation to be received by faith from above. Do we all know this? Are there not some among us, or at least around us, who desire a religion of their own? Is not this one of the special follies of the period? Let us escape from this snare. “He has shown you, O man, what is good.” Abstain, therefore, from further invention. When once we know from God Himself what His requirements are, it becomes treason to debate the question any further. The statement inspired by infinite wisdom satisfies every loyal heart. What God says is to be accepted as final fact. To raise further question is a shuffling method of giving God the lie. He who still asks the road, virtually denies that God has shown it to Him. It is not altogether their humility which keeps certain minds in what they call a receptive condition, never dogmatic, never confident—or as Paul more plainly puts it, “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” To me it would be high presumption not to be sure and confident when God is the teacher. To push further inquiries where revelation speaks is either to deny the revelation or to question its sufficiency. It cannot be that the declarations of God need to be supplemented by opinions and views, and excogitations of our own. “He has shown you, O man, what is good.” Let this suffice us and ceasing to theorize, let us practically obey. Let us become disciples and in this frame of mind we shall gain one of the first essentials of true worship.

True worship cannot, therefore, be will worship and will worship cannot be true worship. We are to bring to God that which God requires of us. We are to act towards God as He commands us and to accept from God that which He presents to us. Our approaches to the Most High are no longer to be a matter of our own taste and cleverness, but to be obedient movements of reverent faith, bowing before the solemn word of the great King. “He has shown you, O man, what is good.”

It is clear from the text before us that God has once and forever settled the way by which He is to be honored among men and He has declared that it is not by outward rites and ceremonies. Upon these in

many Scriptures He pours contempt when He regards them by themselves. In our text He says not a single word as to burnt offerings and calves of a year old. The question has been asked, but in His answer He makes no allusion to the rams and to the rivers of oil of which the questioner thought so much, but He says, “What does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” It seems, then, that it is far more important to do right than to perform the most imposing religious rites. Better to act mercifully than to offer the most costly sacrifices. Much more value is attached to a man’s moral character than to all his outward religiousness, however far he may carry it. The upright and generous actions of daily life are better signs of a gracious heart than lavish gifts to the temple and its priests.

God judges a man rather by what he does ordinarily among his fellows than by what he does sumptuously when he is gorgeously arrayed in his profession, and stands in a chief place of the synagogue and is admired as a chief speaker, or a generous giver to the holy cause. “To obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams.” Those who are acceptable with God are those who do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him. Every man who is a true Christian *does justly*. If faith does not make a man honest, it is not an honest faith. If our conversion has not made us upright, may the Lord convert us again. When a man’s heart is right with God, he longs to deal rightly with his fellow men and shrinks from the idea of taking undue advantage. He who has been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ will not knowingly and willfully defile himself with unjust gain. To his servants, his customers, his employers, he aims to do justly. Nor is this all, for *he loves mercy*. He tries to love his neighbor as himself. If there is an act of kindness to be done, he delights to do it. If there is misery to be helped, need to be succored, good to be bestowed, he says, “Let me have a hand in it, for it is good for me to do good.” The man who is loved by the All-merciful is one who loves mercy. The God of mercy cannot take pleasure in the churlish and brutal. The hard, the cruel, the grasping, the oppressing, the sternly unforgiving are not such as the Lord delights in.

Another point remains. It is the third thing and it is put third because it is of the highest importance, “*to walk humbly with your God.*” This is an inward thing, but little observed. It is observable enough in its consequences, but not in itself and hence very apt to be overlooked. “To walk humbly with your God” is as needful as to do justly and to love mercy, but few there are that find it and hence at this time I would earnestly insist upon this vital, this essential point. I pray God the Holy Spirit to make humble walking with God to seem as important to you as it does to me and to me as important as it does to Himself, for He puts it here in the very forefront of spiritual necessities.

I. First, brethren, we may say of the humble walk which God demands and accepts that IT IS EXCELLENT IN ITSELF. This is one of the things which is good, good morally, good in present effect, good in eternal results. Nothing is better for you, O man, than to walk humbly with your God. Notice every single word of our text, for under this head I will explain humble walking, that you may see its excellence.

Humble walking with God signifies, first, *a perception of God’s being and presence*. In order to our acceptance with God, we must know that He is and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. We must recognize distinctly that there is a God and that He is near us—that He is real and true, and that we are living in actual nearness to Him. We are to walk with Him and this cannot be done unless we know that He is near—men do not walk with myths, or ideas, or remote existences. To have a real God is the backbone of character and to keep company with Him day by day is the right arm of godliness. How many live as if God were a nonentity, a dream, a theological fable, a respectable fancy, and no more? But the acceptable character is made and formed mainly by the fact that God is and that God surrounds us. It is only in the sunlight of God’s own countenance, consciously experienced, that true holiness can be produced and ripened. The godly man is moved to action, helped in endurance, nerved with courage, fired with zeal, elevated with devotion, and purified in life by the presence of God. “You, God, see me,” is a great sanctifier. The Lord said to Abraham, “Walk before Me and be you perfect.” There is no perfection otherwise. David said, “I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.” There is no other safe walking. We are never right unless God is the friend of our pilgrimage, the companion of our thoughts, the rest of our weariness, the home of our delight, the very element of our life. Such nearness to God is good—do we know what it means?

In addition, there must be *an appropriating and accepting of this ever-present God as our God*. The text says, “Walk humbly with *your* God.” Observe that. He must be our God. We must feel that if no

other beings will worship Jehovah, we will do so with our whole hearts. “This God is our God forever and ever.” “O God, You are my God; early will I seek You.” We believe that Jehovah is our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, and if no other creature through whose veins life is throbbing will own Him as its God, we will alone adore and worship Him. We take Him to be our Ruler, Leader, Law-giver, Helper, and Confidence, and if all the world shall set up other gods, we will serve Jehovah alone. “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” This firm allegiance is good and works towards all that is good. When a man feels that he can call God, his God and that he can take hold upon His covenant, then is he strong for honor and virtue, and all things that are pleasing unto God. Because God has entered into covenant with us in Christ Jesus and we have given ourselves over unto Him by a covenant of salt, therefore would we stand firm against temptation and endure as seeing Him who is invisible. Come, brethren, are your hearts thus fixed on God at this moment? Do your spirits walk with your God? Or are you at a distance from God, wandering away from Him? Have you forgotten that God is yours? Are you looking upon Him as another man’s God? Oh, you cannot be strong, clear, and joyous in spirit till God is yours and all your life is spent with Him—till whether you roam, or rest, or sleep, or wake, you still abide with your own God and find your happiness in Him. As the fish abides in the ocean and the bird in the air, and each calls the sea and the sky its own, so do we dwell in God and He is ours forever and ever.

This is not all, the text sets forth the accepted man as *acting ever in the presence of His God*. “To walk” with God denotes an active habit, a communion in the common movements of the day. Some bow humbly before God in the hour of prayer. Others sit humbly in His presence at the time of meditation and others string themselves up to draw near to God in seasons of religious excitement. But all this falls short of walking with God. Walking is a very common pace, an ordinary rate of progress, and it does not seem to require great effort—but then it is a practical working pace, a rate at which a man can continue on and on, and make a day’s journey by the time the sun is down. So walking with God means being with God always, being with God in common things, being with Him on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, as well as on the Sabbath. Being with Him in the shop, with Him in the kitchen, with Him in the field, feeling His presence in buying and selling, in weighing and measuring, in plowing and reaping—doing as unto the Lord the most common acts of life. This it is which is acceptable with the Most High and this is the man who has gotten into a right condition before His Maker—the man who “walks” with his God.

Then comes in the qualifying word of “*humbly*,” about which we have to speak most at this time. It was needful to remind you of the other matters first. God must be recognized as ever present, appropriated as our God, and felt to be a power in all our life or else there can be no humble walking with Him. You must have the verb or there is no sense in the adverb. You must walk before there is any sense in the exhortation to walk humbly.

But now comes the humbling—we *are to live towards God in all that we do in a lowly, reverent spirit*. We are not bidden slavishly to crouch, but humbly to walk. How lowly and penitently we are to walk, let gracious men remind us. If we are favored to walk with God as Abraham did, in all the sweet familiarity of friend with friend, yet must we remember, as he did, that we are but dust and ashes. Our closest communion must take the form of worship. When we see our Lord best, we must fall at His feet with awe. When our walk with God is closest and clearest, we must be overwhelmed with adoring wonder at the condescension which permits us to think of speaking with the Eternal One. To this reverence must be added a constant sense of dependence—walking humbly with God in the sense of daily drawing all supplies from Him and gratefully admitting that it is so. We are never to indulge a thought of independence of God, as if we were anything or could do anything apart from Him. Walking humbly with God involves a profound deference to His will and a glad submission to it—yielding both active obedience and passive acquiescence. Humble walking with God cries under cutting afflictions, “It is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him.” When the Lord bids me serve Him, I must cry for grace to run in the ways of His commandments. And when the Lord chastens me, I must beg for patience to endure His appointments. Walking humbly with God implies all this and much more than just now we could state particularly. May the Holy Spirit teach us all what a broken and contrite spirit means and keep us always low before the Lord.

The practical result of all this inward humbling will be *an acting towards others and a moving in all matters as under the influence of a humble spirit*. If a man once really comes to live and act as in the sight of God, his life must be one of eminent holiness and if under a sense of God’s glory, he abides in

deep humility of spirit, we may expect to see about him all that is tender and quiet. Like his Lord, he will be meek and lowly in heart. He will not domineer over his fellow men. He will not be hard, cruel, unkind. He cannot be. He who feels that he must walk with great softness and tenderness before his God cannot trample on others as if they were only fit to be the dust of his feet. You will not see him supremely disdainful, carrying his head among the stars as though he were some great one. No, he has learned to walk humbly with God and he thinks of himself soberly, as he ought to think. For a man to put on humility before God and throw it off before men would be hypocrisy of the vilest kind. Alas, it is too often seen, but it is base to the utmost. Flee from it as you would from forgery and counterfeit and in very truth, “walk humbly with God.”

I cannot tell you all that my text means, nor if you know it yourself can you make others understand it. Still, they will know that it is something very admirable which makes you to be a good neighbor and a considerate friend, the comfort of the sorrowful, the helper of all. They may not understand from where the quiet spirit derives its gentle dew, but they will perceive its freshness, its sparkling purity, and its goodness, and wonder at its cause. True humility begets a gentleness, a tenderness, a Christ-likeness which men may mock for a while, but which for the most part wins their hearts. The more instructed soon take knowledge of a meek-spirited man that he must have been with Jesus and have learned of Him. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” I do not prescribe to any man that he should try to walk humbly with his fellow man, for without great watchfulness his spirit may glide into meanness and he may lose conscientiousness in a desire to please. But if he will aim at walking humbly with God, he will get into such a proper spirit that he will be in his right position towards all his surroundings below and above, and his life will be such as will commend itself both to God and men.

Thus I have tried to show, while explaining what was meant by walking humbly with our God, that it is a thing most excellent in itself. O Holy Spirit, work it in us for the lowly Savior’s sake!

II. Secondly, this walking humbly with God is very important, for IT IS A TEST OF SALVATION. The man that walks humbly with God is a saved man. The man who does not walk humbly with God should question his condition before God, for in proportion as he fails here he fails altogether. We will ask a few questions concerning this matter.

Friend, if you are walking humbly with God you have taken your right place as a sinner condemned by the law, for certainly you have broken the law and that law requires absolutely perfect obedience, which you have not rendered and never will render. God’s law, then, has condemned you—have you condemned yourself? Have you taken your place as a condemned one and pleaded guilty before God? If you have not done so, your view of yourself differs from God’s view of you. Your view of yourself is a proud one. You are not walking humbly with God and you are not saved. He that never felt himself lost never felt himself saved. He who never confessed himself guilty has never been forgiven. He who has never accepted the sentence which dooms him has never received the pardon which absolves him. Mark this.

Again, if you are walking humbly with God you have given Jesus Christ His right place. What is that? He came into the world to be the Savior of sinners and the only place He will deign to occupy towards you is that He shall save you and save you completely. Some say, “Yes, oh yes. Jesus shall be my Savior and do something toward my salvation.” But He replies, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” Christ will save us from the beginning to the end or He will have nothing to do with our salvation. He will have all the glory of the work and the work itself must be all His own, from the foundation to the top stone, or else He will leave the ruin upon its own heap. Jesus will never consent to be a make-weight for our deficiencies. He will not come at our beck and call to be our lackey, to patch up our old rags, and mend our clouted shoes. No. The Lord Jesus Christ must be everything and we must be nothing, or we shall never agree. Have you given Christ His due place, dear friend? If you have not done so, your view of Christ and God’s view of Christ are very different, and yours is a proud view, for you are putting yourself into the Savior’s place in some degree and you are not walking humbly with God. It is dangerous to the last degree to be pushing the Lord of glory into a corner so that we may occupy His throne. The Lord our God is a jealous God and He is specially jealous of the prerogatives of His Son, and if we are so vain as to rob Christ of His glory and deck ourselves out in stolen honors, we shall quickly incur His hot displeasure. When our heart feels that the blood and righteousness of Jesus constitute her only plea, then is she walking rightly and humbly with God, and all is well.

One other question is a very important one—is salvation seen by you to be wholly of grace? Do you, my friend, judge salvation to be partly by your own works and merits? Do you think that you must at least contribute an ounce weight in the scale, that you must add at least a fraction to the Savior's lump sum? Yes, then it is a question whether you know anything about salvation. I do not want to make doctrinal opinions a test, but it does seem to me that there is something wrong in the heart which looks for salvation anywhere but to the free favor of God. To walk humbly with God is to feel, "If ever such a poor, condemned soul as I am shall be saved, it must be by an act of free and sovereign mercy, for if justice has its way apart from mercy, I am driven forever into the darkness of despair." I am come to this pass myself, that if salvation is at all of myself, if any merit is required of me, though it is as little as the small dust of the balance, or the drop that trembles in the bucket after it is turned upside down, I cannot find it. Grace must save me or I am lost. When the soul has come to that pass, it is walking humbly with God, but those who are, even in the smallest degree, out of the circle of grace, are not walking humbly with God and they have grave cause to question their spiritual state.

This suggests to me another thought. I know several persons who seem to be seeking peace with God and mercy in Christ, who never get it because, as it seems to me, they are not walking humbly with God as to their *intellect*. The last thing that some men will do is to bow their understanding to the teaching of God. They are always carping and raising quibbles with God instead of believing Him. They need to be silenced, as Job was before the manifested glory of God, or they will die asking questions. Those mysterious truths which relate to the Most High, such creatures as we are can never expect to understand. In the region of the infinite there is ample space for faith, but reason loses her track. Faith is our privilege, let us exercise it freely towards the Lord. In God's great family is the comprehension of the Father's mind to be a *sine qua non* of our affection for Him? Am I never to believe what my Father tells me till I understand it? Must all Your gold, great God, be tried in my crucible before I will accept it at Your hand? Are You a liar unless my brain prove You true? Am I, after all, to be lord over my own thoughts and are You to have no supremacy in the kingdom of my mind? Does any man fancy that his soul can ever be right while this is his theory? How can the heart stand in an even place and be at peace while it refuses to acknowledge the sway of God? We must yield our intellect to the superior intellect, permitting the drop to be borne along by the river. The infallible speech of Him who cannot err must satisfy the obedient mind.

To the true heart there is no self-denial in agreeing that omniscience shall stand instead of personal discovery, infallible revelation in the place of research and argument, and the witnessing Spirit in the place of authority and evidence. Every word of God is surer than the most certain deductions of mathematics or the clearest inferences of reasoning. God's slightest hint, though it comes not to a positive declaration, is to be treasured up by us as a priceless gem. Well does the apostle say, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men." There is more light in God's darkness than in man's light. His every word is infallible, but as for the thoughts of man, He knows that they are vanity.

This seems to be a test, then, by which we may try whether we are saved or not. Are we walking humbly with God or not? Are we trying to be something, to do something, to think something, or in some way or other to let it be manifest that we are not to be overlooked? If so, there is great fear that we are not yet right with heaven. God says, "I am and there is none beside Me." Do we consent to shrink into nothingness or are we eager to cry out, "I, too, am something. I must not be ignored, for I have my right and claims which may not be forgotten." Beloved, I delight to hear the divine voice crying, "I am," and to run and hide myself beneath His eternal wings, cowering down beneath them, even as the little chicks hide beneath the mother, and are as though they were not apart from her. It is good to shrink into a happy insignificance, to feel that we are nothing, save only as we are hidden away with Christ in God. God is, and as for our existence, it is but that of God displaying Himself in us. We are nothing. God is all in all. When we are thus humbled we are saved. What is there to be lost? The eternal burnings of the divine greatness has consumed the vainglory of the creature and that which remains has no cause to fear. With this man will God dwell forever on terms of peace, even with him who is of a humble and a contrite spirit, and trembles at His word.

III. I must pass on very briefly to say, in the third place, of walking humbly with God, that IT IS A SYMPTOM OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH. You can tell, dear friend, not only whether you are saved, but afterwards, whether your new life is in a growing state, by examining whether you are walking humbly with God. Let me dwell upon that matter for a minute. We are healthy in soul if we have lowly views in

reference to ourselves upon *matters of divine grace*. Come, now, what do you think of yourself this morning? Are you a fine fellow, a disciple indeed, an example to others? Do you now account yourself to be a very experienced Christian, quite a useful member of the church, an ornament to society, a person considerably looked up to and well worthy of a large measure of respect? It would be very improper to put you in a back seat, or invite you to take a lower room, for are you not a prince in Israel? Among those who might be counted as pillars, you feel that you must be mentioned. But have a care what you are at! It is very easy to feel great. It is by no means an eminently difficult thing to be exalted. I have reached that point myself without great effort, and I take no credit, but much shame for it. A sense of rising to be somebody is not a sign of health. It is a token of the reverse sometimes and may be the forerunner of most solemn catastrophes. Puffing up may mean bloating and swelling with deadly tumors, therefore beware of it.

Signs of health lie in quite another line. Will you try and follow me for a minute in a humbling meditation? Remember what you were a little while ago. Then the thought that you would even be a member of the church of Christ seemed too good for you! If anyone had said, "You will be numbered with God's people. You will enjoy with them the sweets of pardoning grace," you would have said, "Then I do not care where they put me. If I am only one of the dogs under the Master's table, I shall be perfectly satisfied to eat the crumbs." Like the prodigal, we were ready to cry, "Make me as one of Your hired servants," so long as we might but eat the bread from the Father's table we had no care for honor. Ah, you did not think you would be such a big man as you are now, did you? When you filled the swine trough and fed the unclean, yourself hungry and faint, you had no idea to what you would grow. God grant you may have every particle of boasting removed from you at this time as you remember the hole of the pit from which you were quarried. Taken from the dunghill and placed among princes, let our grateful hearts renounce all self-glory and magnify the Lord.

Another set of reflections may rise up on considering what you now are. What are you now? At your best, what have you to boast of? You are thought by others to be something very great and respectable, but what are the facts of the case as God sees them? You are a branch of the true vine—yes, how much fruit do you bear? Compare yourself with those branches that bring forth much fruit to God. How thin and lean is your vintage! You are weighed down by the responsibilities which your position thrusts upon you, but are you bearing them worthily? Are you doing for God what some would do if they had your opportunities? Are you doing for Christ what once you thought you would do if you ever had the means? Are you now living according to your own notion of how a Christian should live—are you anywhere near it? Oh, my brother, when you think of what you are now, there is more to make you blush than to make you boast, more to make you cover your face than to cause you to lift up your head. At least, such is my case.

Once more, I beg you to think of what you would be within a very short time if you were left by divine grace. We sometimes condemn men for their acts and are right in condemning them, and yet if we had been in their position we might have done much worse. "Oh," says one, "what a mercy it is I have been kept these thirty years and have never dishonored my profession!" Yes, brother, it is a mercy, a great mercy, a greater mercy than you dream. You do not happen to have a vixen for a wife, or a troublesome family, or a provoking neighbor, or you would have lost your character long ago. Domestic comfort may deserve more praise than any goodness on your part. It is a mercy for you that the evil person who used to have such influence over you was taken away, or else I do not know where you would have been. Many an evil character has been the result of vicious influence. A great deal of apparent virtue may be due to our not happening to be tempted at the time when we are in a certain condition, or else if our tinder and the devil's sparks had met, who knows but what the best of us might have been ablaze by now? Oh, how much we owe to preventing grace! We are debtors both to the providence and the grace of God which have kept us out of harm's way. When sometimes we have been compelled to condemn sin in a brother and to speak very solemnly, as we are bound to do, we have remembered ourselves lest we also should be tempted, and we have remembered that grace alone has kept us out of sin. "Such a one was drunk," says one, "after making a profession of religion." We do not exonerate him for a moment. It was a shameful crime, but oh, my friend, had you been precisely in his condition, had you been once a victim to that degrading vice, met by the same company, and in other respects surrounded as he was, you might have been intoxicated long before he became so—who knows? Walk humbly with

your God at any rate, my friend. The true way to live is to give God all the glory and take to ourselves all the shame.

When God gives us great temporal enjoyments, then let us think, “Why do I have these comforts while many of His servants are without them? Is it possible that He is giving me my portion in this life?” That will lay a cool hand on your hot forehead and forbid all pride in wealth. If God makes you rich, instead of doting on your riches, say to yourself, “How can I best use my substance for His glory?” The working out of that practical question should be quite sufficient to keep you from self-esteem. He who truly serves the Lord will walk humbly with Him. Have you more talent than other people? You will be a great fool if you begin to rejoice in it, for serious responsibilities come with special ability. Remember you have to do more for God than other people and that thought should, by God’s grace, be as ballast for your wide-spread sail. Great talent might be a sun to smite you if a sense of responsibility did not come in like a cloud to shield you.

Are you honored among men? Then say to yourself, “Ah, they do not know me or they might judge me otherwise. If I deserve their esteem for some things, yet there are many things which make me hang my head.” If we deserve all the gratitude of our fellows, we should still be deeply anxious not to take a grain of praise to ourselves lest God should be angry with us for robbing Him of His revenue of glory. What have we that we have not received?

We must always have lowly views of ourselves before God in regard to matters of grace and it should be the same *in reference to His providence*. For instance, if one of you shall have been much tried in business and have lost much money—suppose you are angry with God and quarrel with Him about it—is that walking humbly with Him? When we complain at the loss of children or friends, is not that the pride of our heart? To walk humbly with God would lead you to say, “It is the Lord, let Him do what seems good to Him!” But a proud heart virtually cries, “God shall do as I like, or else He shall have no obedience from me. He shall always use His right hand and pour into my lap all that I desire, or else we will part company.” It is the hypocrite who will not always call upon God—a little trial cools his love. Ah, friend, this will not do. Complaining and rebelling are not walking humbly with God. Humbly walking with God yields itself entirely to the divine will and says, “Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil? The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Humbly walking with God will enable a man to receive providences from God without expecting to understand why they came. “I cannot comprehend,” says a man, “why, in the very midst of my usefulness, I am laid aside.” Is God bound to tell you why? When you are denied an explanation, are you walking humbly with God? Has the father to tell his little son the reason for everything he does? Is that the way you govern your family? Are you cross-questioned by little ones in pinafores? No, my brethren, fathers have their honor and much more our heavenly Father. God gives no account of His matters. It is a part of my humbly walking with God to accept providences of which I cannot see the object or design, and to be grateful for them. When God sends, as it seems to us, the wrong providence, when He does to us that which seems unwise and unkind, we are still to say, “He must be good to Israel and all His dealings must be wise and kind. I am but as a wild ass’s colt and know nothing and can judge nothing. God knows all things, so let His will be done.” This is to walk humbly with Him.

If the Lord turns His hand and multiplies your treasure and gives you the bright and sunny days, the elastic step and cheery heart, take heed that you walk humbly with Him. It is easy to think something of yourself when the purse is bulky—but fling away such folly. Hold your possessions loosely and say, “Lord, I am grateful for these, but if You in the future take them away, I will not murmur. I do not suspend my love to You upon these outward things. I love You for Yourself and for Your richer grace. My love is not held by the tenure of Your favoring me with health and strength. I will trust You though You slay me. Though You take all away, out of the very dust will I still praise You.”

I think I have thus shown that it is a symptom of spiritual health when a man can walk humbly with God.

IV. And now, fourthly, we may say of this humble walking that IT IS A CAUSE FOR VERY GREAT ANXIETY. We must walk humbly, my brothers and sisters, but this is more easily said than done. This is no child’s play. Humility of spirit is a virtue which is likely to be overlooked. We pay some attention to doing justly and loving mercy, but walking humbly with God is so inward, so ethereal, and so spiritual that we are apt to overlook it. Yet it is the main thing and all our thoughts should go to

the securing of it. You may, if you will, give all your substance to the poor and your bodies to be burned, but if you walk not humbly with God you have missed the essence of godliness.

It is easy enough to keep up private devotion, and family devotion, and public devotion, and to be regular at sacraments and sermons, and to be everything that is moral, and just, and upright, and yet after all, to not be walking humbly with God and therefore a failure here is highly probable, but none the less terrible. Humble walking is so difficult to come at that thousands sit down content with that which looks like it, but is by no means the same thing. It is so easy to think yourself humble. To feign humility is, of all things, most shocking and yet to be truly humble is, of all things, most difficult. Have you never noticed how, when you fancied you were lowly before God, it was only that you were unbelieving or out of health? Do not mistake indigestion for humility.

When you said to yourself, “Now I am on familiar terms with God and living near Him in communion,” it turned out to be presumption rather than faith. And supposed humility has, in like manner, full often condensed into despair. Are you now saying, “I think I am humble”? Is there ever a time when a man is so proud as when he judges that he is humble? “Ah,” you say, “but I cannot exalt myself, I am in such a condition of heart I must walk humbly with God.” My Beloved, I beseech you to be more on your guard now than ever against pride, for a haughty spirit lurks in an assurance of humility, like a lion in its den. The leaven of self is brought into our meal in the measure of a supposed necessity of humbleness. To be really lowly, really nothing before God, really to yield yourselves up to Him—this is such a work and such a difficulty that I commend you to attempt it in order that you may see how impossible it is to you apart from the power of the Holy Spirit, who alone can help us to walk humbly with God.

V. With this I close, when I have said, in the fifth place, in praise of walking humbly with God, that **IT IS THE SOURCE OF THE DEEPEST CONCEIVABLE PLEASURE.** If you walk humbly with God you will feel safe. What can harm the man who sits at the feet of the great Lord and waits on His will? Ah! now you feel that, happen what may, nothing can harm you, for you are ready to bow before it and let the Lord alone reign. What peace it gives when you feel that if there is anything about you which grieves your God, you will gladly let it go, you have already surrendered it, you would not retain it for an hour. The tempest rolls overhead, but all is calm below when the heart has learned full surrender and is even as a weaned child. Your spirit must rest then, it cannot help resting, for it dwells in God.

Into this quietness and rest there comes enjoyment, for the man that leaves everything to God finds joy in everything. Mercies which to others are commonplace are sweet to him. He wonders at the love which God displays in them all. As mercies come to him, he receives them with songs of thankfulness. He is grateful to think that he has bread to eat and clothes to wear, for he knows how unworthy he is. And when great mercies are showered on him, he sits down before God and cries, “Why is this to me? What am I and what is my father’s house?” He is the man who joins Mary in her Magnificat, singing, “My soul does magnify the Lord.” He sings with the psalmist, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name.” He sits at heaven’s gate waiting to enter and he shall not long be detained outside, for as joy and peace and a heavenly mind have come to him, so shall they soon bring him to their home. He who has learned to walk humbly with God shall soon see the face of God in His glory. God teach us all this sacred art, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

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